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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

FEBRUARY 1978

AT THE BREAD COUNTER

THE CITRUS SITUATION...NOW!

If you remember that mid-January freeze and think it's responsible for higher frozen concentrated orange juice prices, you're only partially right. The freeze that was responsible was that of January 1977--not January 1978.

The '77 freeze cut the yield per box and over-all production of frozen concentrated orange juice last year--and pulled stocks down. As a result, the price of the familiar 6 oz. can climbed at a steady rate last year.

According to the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the price of those 6 oz. cans rose from an average of 27.9 cents in December, 1976, to an average of 39.6 cents last December; then jumped to 41.2 cents last month.

Those prices went up last year because of low yields of juice per box, 1.17 gallons--lowest in years. Gradually lower supplies pushed carryover of the 1976-77 crop down to 26 million gallons, only about half that of a year ago.

Meanwhile, there was another mid-January freeze this year--and the Florida orange crop is down 11 percent from a year ago. But this freeze only caused slight damage to the northernmost citrus producing areas. Production of, and yield per box for frozen concentrated orange juice is seen much higher this year. As a result, the price of frozen concentrated orange juice might not go down, but it probably won't be going much higher either.

Remember when some people were predicting the price of bread would go to \$1 a loaf because the price of wheat was going up? Well, that was a few years ago. Since then the price of wheat has dropped about 50 percent but the price of a loaf of bread has gone up. How could that happen?

Simple. The price of wheat has little to do with the price of bread.

Back in 1970, a loaf of white bread cost about 24 cents. Out of that, about 2.6 cents was going back to the farmer for his wheat. By 1974, bread was costing about 35 cents a loaf. And, with wheat prices up, about 5.4 cents went back to the farmer.

Bread prices have remained around 35 cents a loaf, but the farmer's return for his wheat dropped to 4.5 cents a loaf in 1975. By 1976, it was down to 3.8 cents and in 1977, when wheat prices dropped to about \$2 a bushel, the farmer was once again getting about 2.6 cents back for his wheat in a loaf of bread. This was the lowest share of the retail price that the farmer has received since 1932.

The farmer has been getting higher returns for some of the other farm ingredients that go into bread, but 90 percent of the price increase for a loaf of bread since 1970 went to middlemen. Margins for the flour miller and the baker-wholesaler almost doubled----which accounted for practically all of the increase in the farm-to-retail spread. Higher wages and higher costs of energy--and other non-farm items--contribute to the over-all picture.

FOOD CLIPS

Did you know that: one serving of cooked mustard greens has only 16 calories but provides 91 percent of the vitamin A, 74 percent of the vitamin C and 12 percent of the calcium in the suggested daily adult nutritional requirements?

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A serving of cooked spinach has about 20 calories but provides an average adult with 100 percent of the vitamin A for recommended daily requirements, according to the latest USDA Yearbook of Agriculture.

* * *

Iodized salt will inhibit proper fermentation and react with the starch in some foods, causing them to turn pink or blue.

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In home canning, remember that foods not covered with liquid will have poorer quality.

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One cup of dried vegetables, when reconstituted, becomes two cups. Barely cover them in cold water a minimum of 20 minutes (to 2 hours) to replace the moisture.

AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS: New USDA charts on "The Cost of Meats and Meat Alternates" for December 1977 and the "Cost of 20 grams of Protein From Specified Meat and Meat Alternates" are now available from the Editor of Food and Home Notes.

ABOUT

YOU

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ME

New face, at least at the International Food Technicians/Virginia Polytechnic Food Editor's Conference at Williamsburg, Va., was that of Food Chemical News staffer Louis Rothschild, Jr....Missing face, at the same conference: That of Lillian Marshall, Food Editor of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, who later emphasized that a report she was ill was "slightly exaggerated." Fact is, she says, she opted to attend the internationally-famous Cordon Bleu Cooking School in Europe later this spring, instead....New Food Editors: At the Army Times, Caroline MacNair replaces Diane Hand, the one-time USDA staffer and past president of the Capital Press Women, who's now doing p.r. work in Minneapolis. At the Boston (Mass.) Herald American, it's Donna Lee. She replaces Barbara Burtoff, who has returned to college for her Master's degree but will continue at the H-A as freelance Food Editor of their Sunday magazine.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

While supply lasts, free, single copies of the following booklets are available from the Publications Office, GPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

- "Growing Chrysanthemums in the Home Garden", Home & Garden Bulletin #65
- "Growing Iris in the Home Garden", Home & Garden Bulletin #66
- "Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons", Home & Garden Bulletin #71
- "Selecting and Growing House Plants", Home & Garden Bulletin #82

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